

Safety Matters

State of Delaware Issue CLXXIV February 2021
Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

Click here for Delaware's latest COVID-19 information de.gov/coronavirus

WORKPLACE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Whether working remotely or onsite, employees are encouraged to adopt the following safety checklist, where practical, for their home or office workstations. Take a moment to look around your office environment and review the checklist items below.

GENERAL

1. Workspace is away from noise, distractions, and is devoted to your work needs.
2. Workspace accommodates workstation, equipment and related material.
3. Floors are clear and free from hazards.
4. File drawers are not top-heavy and do not open into walkways.
5. Phone lines and electrical cords are secured under a desk or along a wall, and away from heat sources.
6. Temperature, ventilation and lighting are adequate.
7. All stairs with 4 or more steps are equipped with handrails.
8. Carpets are well secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams.

FIRE SAFETY

9. There is a working smoke detector in the workspace area.
10. A home multi-use fire extinguisher, which you know how to use, is readily available.
11. Walkways, aisles and doorways are unobstructed.
12. Workspace is kept free of trash, clutter and flammable liquids.
13. All radiators and portable heaters are located away from flammable items.
14. You have an emergency plan so you know what to do in the event of an emergency.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

15. Sufficient electrical outlets are accessible.
16. Computer equipment is connected to a surge protector.
17. All electrical plugs, cords, outlets and panels are in good condition. There is no exposed/damaged wiring.
18. Equipment is placed close to electrical outlets so that extension cords are not necessary.
19. There is no daisy chaining or permanent usage of extension cords or power strips.
20. Equipment is turned off when not in use.

COMPUTER WORKSTATION

21. Chair casters/wheels are secure and the rungs and legs of the chair are sturdy.
22. Chair is adjustable.
23. Your back is adequately supported by a backrest or other means of support.
24. Your feet are on the floor or adequately supported by a footrest.
25. You have sufficient legroom at your workstation.
26. There is sufficient light for reading.
27. The computer screen is free from noticeable glare.
28. The computer screen is at eye level.
29. There is sufficient space to rest your hands and arms when not using the keyboard.
30. You take sufficient mini-breaks/change positions in order to rest your eyes and your muscles.

OTHER SAFETY/SECURITY MEASURES

31. Files and data are secure.
32. Materials and equipment are in a secure place that can be protected from damage and misuse.
33. You have an inventory of all equipment in your workspace, including serial numbers.
34. If applicable, you use up-to-date anti-virus software, keep virus definitions up-to-date and run regular scans.

HOME SAFETY/SECURITY TIPS

Use GFCI outlets

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters prevent electric shocks, and they're required by code in certain rooms. If you own a newer home, you've probably noticed them in your kitchen and bathroom. You'll also find them in areas that are prone to moisture, like a crawl space. If you have an older home, you can inexpensively add a GFCI receptacle. A worthy investment.

Lock up any drugs or weapons

If you take medication or own weapons, keep them locked up. It's especially important to get a secure gun safe.

Look out for poison that looks like food

Keep household cleaners and medications out of the kitchen and away from food. Cough drops look like candy. Pills look like candy. Shaving cream looks like whip cream! Kids don't always know the difference, so it's best to keep poisonous products out of reach.

Add slip-resistant mats to the bath

Slip-resistant mats might seem like an old person thing, but they guard against accidental slips in the tub or shower. Slips/falls happen to everyone.

Install bathroom grab bars

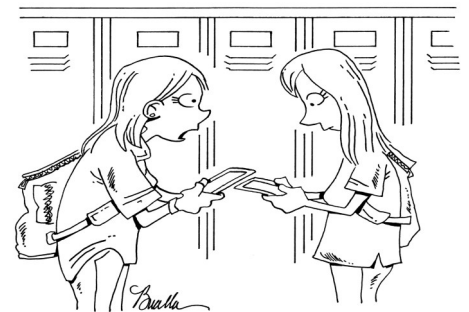
This is a step up from the slip-resistant mat. You might feel too young for grab bars, but let's face it: you're going to need them eventually. Why not be extra safe by installing them now?

Watch out for stairs

Stairs can be dangerous. Keep your stairways well lit, and if you don't have a stable railing, add one. If there's carpet on your stairs, it needs to be tight with no protruding nails or tripping hazards. And, if you've got little ones, install a gate at the top of the stairs.

Take home maintenance seriously

Don't let the projects pile up. Some home maintenance issues can be safety issues. Think carpet that no longer lies flat (tripping hazard), smoke alarms with old batteries (fire hazard), burnt-out lightbulbs (safety issue), or mold (health issue). A home in tip-top shape is a safe home.



"I'm not sure. I'll have to ask my grandma how people used to express themselves before emojis."

VALENTINE'S DAY RIDDLES

1. Why did the cannibal break up with his Valentine?
2. Why did the banana go out with the prune for Valentine's Day?
3. What do squirrels give each other for Valentine's Day?
4. Do skunks celebrate Valentine's Day?
5. What did the painter say to his Valentine?
6. What did the paper clip say to the magnet?

Answers on Page 2

WORKING FROM HOME ERGONOMIC SAFETY TIPS

In an effort to stem the number of coronavirus infections, millions of Americans are now working from home, transforming kitchen tables and bedrooms into temporary home offices. Many are working under less-than-ideal ergonomic conditions—a kitchen chair that's too low, a table that's too high. You get the idea. Poor ergonomics can make or break your work-from-home experience.

To help you create an ergonomic workstation at home follow these safety tips:

DON'T hunch over your laptop

Fit the backrest curvature of your chair to the small of the lower back to avoid lumbar discomfort. It's easy to work on your laptop for a few hours on the weekend, but doing so for 35-plus hours a week can lead to back, shoulder, and neck strain. If you can, use an external monitor or laptop stand (with an external keyboard and mouse) to prop up your screen. When looking at the screen, your eye line should be level with the address bar on your web browser.

DO work at an appropriate height

Find a working height so that your elbows naturally fall flush with your table/desk height. This will promote better wrist alignment rather than impingement or carpal tunnel stress.

DO use an office chair if possible

Adjustable features on an office task chair will save you from lumbar and neck discomfort. When sitting or standing, elbows should be at a 90-degree angle to make wrists as straight as possible.

DON'T give up on your current chair

If you don't have the option of an office chair, there are some household items you can use to help you adjust. Putting a firm cushion or tightly folded towel under your buttocks will raise your hips and increase the curve of your spine, making sitting more comfortable.

DON'T let your feet dangle

Place your feet on a few books or boxes under your desk, so that your thighs are nearly parallel to the floor and your hips are slightly higher than your knees. This will reduce stress on your lumbar spine.

DO follow the 20/20/20 rule

For every 20 minutes spent looking at a computer screen, you should spend 20 seconds looking at something else 20 feet away. This gives your eye muscles a break and helps reduce eye strain.

DON'T turn your couch into a workstation

As tempting as it is, the couch is not an optimal place to work at your computer for the entire day. Although it may be comfortable, having your legs or full body in a vertical position can lead to muscle numbness and discomfort.

DO customize a space to fit you

Try to set up a workstation that you can make entirely your own. Sharing a workstation means you need to adjust your computer height, chair, and furniture every time you sit down. Often, you may choose to skip adjusting the workstation altogether. If you are the only person using the space, customizing will reduce the time and discomfort of sitting at a station that does not fit you.

DON'T skip lunch and make sure you stay hydrated

It's easy to snack throughout the day instead of eating like you did in the office. Making a meal and staying hydrated gives you the opportunity to stand up, walk around, and let your eyes have a rest from the computer screen.

DO make sure you get up and walk around

The goal is to get in as many steps as possible during the day, even if you are at home instead of at your work location.

SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

You may wish to consider the following door safety tips:

- 1) **Secure sliding doors**—Sliding glass doors are made of glass, so a lock might not cut it. Secure a sliding glass door from sliding open with a metal or wood rod to reinforce the door. Consider adding a jimmy plate (latch guard). The plate will prevent a burglar from lifting the door off its tracks and gaining access to your home.
- 2) **Reinforce door jams**—Non-glass doors can be weak too. In general, the weakest points on a door are the lock, jamb, and the hinges. Reinforce all three points on all external entryways.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

“

**WHAT THE WORLD
REALLY NEEDS IS
MORE LOVE AND
LESS PAPERWORK.**

PEARL BAILEY
ACTRESS

”

BURN AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Scalds are the most common burn injury among young children and one of the leading causes of accidental death in the home for children under age four. U.S. hospitals treat an estimated 110,000 people under 19 for scalds every year.

While thousands of scald burns occur annually, increased awareness of the dangers can prevent injuries. To help people be mindful of scald burns, the American Burn Association has declared February 7 through 13, 2021 as National Burn Awareness Week.

Take a look around your home today, especially in the kitchen and bathroom, to make sure you are doing all you can to protect yourself and family members from a painful and possibly lengthy recovery from scalds and burns.

Recommendations for simple preventative steps that you can take include:

Keeping children at least three feet from hot appliances including cooking stoves, fireplaces, and space and water heaters.

Never cook, carry or drink hot beverages while holding a child, and make sure hot liquids are kept well away from edges of tables and counters. Avoid using tablecloths or anything that a child can pull on that would cause hot food or beverages to spill.

When cooking turn pot handles inward and use rear burners if possible; never leave the stove unattended while in use.

Always test cooked food or hot drinks for temperature before serving to a child as well as testing bath water before placing a child in the tub.

Set your home water heater thermostat to a maximum of 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Consider installing an anti-scald device on the tub as even in the presence of the most vigilant parent it only takes a moment for a child to turn on the hot water faucet while bathing.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



“Our son is at that awkward age where he's living in our basement.”

RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1. She didn't suit his taste.
2. Because he couldn't get a date!
3. Forget me nuts!
4. Of course they do!
They're very scent-imental.
5. “I love you with all my art.”
6. “I find you very attractive.”